

Greensburg Bishop Edward C. Malesic statement on grand jury report from Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Upon hearing about the grand jury report regarding the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown that was released today (March 1), my thoughts and prayers first go to all the victims and their families who have been impacted by the actions described in this report and to the Catholic community of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. May the healing mercy of God be with them all.

This is the most recent reminder that the Catholic Church, along with every other civil and social organization in society, must always be diligent in our efforts to protect children and young people and to make those efforts one of our highest priorities. It is in the Diocese of Greensburg.

Our commitment to the protection of children and young people is paramount in all aspects of our ministry and administration. I want to reiterate that we in the Diocese of Greensburg are committed to protecting children and young people and have had policies and procedures in place to ensure this protection for more than 30 years, since 1985. Our policies and procedures to protect children and report suspected child abuse are constantly reviewed and regularly updated.

The most recent update to these policies and procedures occurred in December 2014 when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted new legislation in the wake of child abuse scandals, revising the Child Protective Services Law regarding mandated reporting of suspected child abuse and background checks. The Diocese of Greensburg has made the broadest interpretation of these new laws, and we have required all of our employees and

all of our volunteers, whether or not they work directly with children and teens, to undergo the Pennsylvania-mandated background checks. In addition, any employee or volunteer who has a suspicion that child abuse has occurred is required to immediately report that suspicion to the state child abuse hotline. That is required of every member of the clergy, including me as Bishop, all diocesan and parish staff members, and every volunteer working for the diocese, its parishes and its Catholic schools, and all other diocesan entities.

As further evidence of our commitment to protect children and young people, the Diocese of Greensburg has been found to be in compliance with the U.S. Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" and the "Essential Norms" in every one of our independent USCCB audits since 2003. The most recent of these audits was in the fall of 2015.

As we experience God's healing grace in this Year of Mercy, I encourage everyone to join me in praying for all the people who have been affected by this sad reality.

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